Weekly National Intelligencer.

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Weekly National Intelligencer.

BY GALES & SEATON.

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1863.

OPENING OF CONGRESS

We need not remind our readers that this is the day appointed by law for the assembling of the Thirty-eighth Congress of the United States. It meets under circumstances which will give to its deliberations and decisions an interest second only to that which attended the proceedings of the last Congress, when, in its opening session, it was called to devise ways and means for the defence of the Government from an armed sedition threatening the safety of the very Capitol in which the Representatives of the Loyal States were gathered.

The time has passed when any apprehensions of this kind can longer excite the solicitude of the people in behalf of the National Legislature. But when we reflect how largely the measures that shall be adopted by the present Congress must tend to give color to our national destiny in all time to come, it is safe to say that rarely has any body of men been called to act as the depositaries of interests so vast, or the arbiters of issues involving so much of good or evil to this great people. Convened under auspices which give so much of dignity and solemnity to their deliberations, the Representatives of the Loyal States and people are now called, if ever men were so called, to put aside passion and prejudice, that they may keep a single eye to the welfare of the nation, and that, discharging all their duties under a profound sense of their responsibility to God and the country, they may be able by their wise counsels and prudent measures to restore union and peace throughout all our borders, and transmit the blessings of free constitutional Government to our latest posterity.

THE CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM.

The following are the resolutions adopted at a meeting of the conservative members of the House of Representatives, held on the 28th of June last. They were promulgated at the time as the expression of the views which then obtained among their authors with regard to the origin and objects of the "war for the Union." These resolutions were originally published in the Intelligencer of July 1st, 1862.

THE RESOLUTIONS.

Feeling the great weight of our responsibility as members of Congress, we have met in no party spirit nor for any party purpose, but for the purpose of deliberating and consulting together how we may best perform our Congreesional duties in the present great and perilous crisis of our country's fate, and we have come to the following conclusions, namely :

1. Resolved, That the Constitution and the Union and the laws must be preserved and maintained in all their proper and rightful supremacy, and that the rebellion now in arms against them must be suppressed and put down,

and proper to that end.

2. Resolved, That the true interests of the country, as well as the dictates of humanity, require that no more war or acts of war should be prosecuted or done than are necessary and proper for the prompt and complete sup-

3. Resolved. That the States are component and essen tial parts of the Union, bound together inseparably by the titution of the United States; that none of them can cease to exist as such so long as that Constitution sur vives, and that it is the exclusive sphere and duty of the States to order and direct their own domestic affairs. While the rebellion, therefore, has not annulled or destroved the constitutional relations of the so-called " Second ing States" to the Federal Government, neither has i divested those States of any rights or powers, municips or otherwise, properly belonging to them as members of the Federal Union. The actual exercise of those rights The actual exercise of those rights and powers may for a time be interrupted or obstructed llion, and some illegitimate authority may be substituted in its place, but as soon as that rebellion is suppress ed, these States will be entitled, as of right, to resume the exercise of all the rights and powers, dignities and immunities which properly belong to them as States of

4 Resolved, That the present war, as avowed by the President and Congress, and understood by the people, was commenced and presecuted for the purpose of suppressing the rebellion, and preserving and vindicating the Constitution, the Union, and the laws, and for that purpose only It was a great and noble purpose high above any mere sectional or party object, and at once it inspired united in its support all loyal men of every creed party, and section At the call of the Government mighty army, the most patriotic, sprung at once into the field, and is bleeding and conquering in the defence of its Government. Under these circumstances it would, in our on, be most unjust and ungenerous to give any new character or direction to the war for the accomplishment of any other than its great first purpose, and especially for the accomplishment of any mere party or sections

5 Resolved. That the many and great victories lately schieved by our armies and navies, whilst they ought to convince the world of the vast military power of our Government, give us the pleasing assurance that our de rable civil war will soon be brought to a close, should the proper objects of the war, as herein before defined, be kept steadily in view. When that is done, and when such punishment is inflicted on such of the guilty leaders as will satisfy public justice, and upon such others as have made themselves conspicuous for crimes committed in the prosecution of the rebellion, it is our opinion that our Government should adopt such wise measures of clemency as will tend to bring back cordial reconciliation and peace

to the whole country.

6 Resolved, That the doctrines of the secessionists and of the abolitionists, as the latter are now represented in Congress, are alike false to the Constitution and irrecon cilable with the unity and peace of the country. have already involved us in a cruel civil war, and the others (the abolitionists) will leave to the country but little hope of the speedy restoration of union or peace, if the scheme n, emancipation, and other unconstitutional measures which they have lately carried, and attempted to House of Representatives, shall angeted into the form of laws, and remain unrebuked by

the people.
7 Resolved. That Congress has no power to deprive any person of his property for any criminal offence, unless that person has been first duly convicted of the offence by the verdiet of a jury. And that all acts of Congress like those lately passed by the House of Representatives which as forfeit or confiscate the estates of men for offences which they have not been convicted upon due trial by jury are unconstitutional, and lead to oppression and tyranny. It is no justification for such acts that the rimes committed in the prosecution of the rebellion are of unexampled atrocity, nor is there any such justification

as "State necessity" known to our Government or laws. 8. The foregoing resolutions are in explanation and re-affirmation of the resolution passed at the extra session of the present Congress, known as the "Crittenden resoluand which declared "that this war is not waged on our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor for the purpose of over throwing or interfering with the rights or established in stitutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union with all the d guity, equality, and rights of the severa States unimpaired, and that as soon as these objects are secomplished the war ought to cease."

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The following is a copy of the Annual Message of the President of the United States which was yesterday laid before both Houses of Congress : Fellow citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives :

Another year of health, and of sufficiently abundant harvests, has passed. For these, and especially for the improved condition of our national affairs, our renewed and profoundest gratitude to God is due.

We remain in peace and friendship with foreign Powers The efforts of disloyal citizens of the United States to involve us in foreign wars, to aid an inexcusable insurrection, have teen unavailing. Her Britannic Majesty's Government, as was justly expected, have exercised their authority to prevent the departure of new hostile expeditions from British ports. The Emperor of France has by a like proceeding, promptly vindicated the neutrality which he proclaimed at the beginning of the contest Questions of great intricacy and importance have arisen out of the blockade, and other belligerent operations be tween the Government and several of the maritim Powers, but they have been discussed, and, as far as was possible, accommodated in a spirit of frankness, justice, and mutual good will. It is especially gratifying that our prize courts, by the impartiality of their adjudications have commanded the respect and confidence of maritime

The supplemental treaty between the United States and Great Britain for the suppression of the African slave trade, made on the 17th day of February last, has been duly ratified, and carried into execution. It is believed that, so far as American ports and American citizens are concerned, that inhuman and odious traffic has been rought to an end.

I shall submit for the consideration of the Senate a conrention for the adjustment of possessory claims in Washington Territory, arising out of the treaty of the 15th June, 1846, between the United States and Great Britain. and which have been the source of some disquiet among the citizens of that now rapidly improving part of the

A novel and important question, involving the extent o the maritime jurisdiction of Spain in the waters which surround the island of Cuba, has been debated without reaching an agreement, and it is proposed, in an amicable spirit, to refer it to the arbitrament of a friendly Power. A convention for that purpose will be submitted to the

I have thought it proper, subject to the approval of the Senate, to concur with the interested commercial Powers in an arrangement for the liquidation of the Scheldt dues upon the principles which have been heretofore adopted in regard to the imposts upon navigation in the waters of Denmark.

The long pending controversy between this Government and that of Chili touching the seizure at Sitania, in Peru, by Chilian officers, of a large amount of treasure belonging to citizens of the United States, has been brought to a close by the award of his Majesty the King of the Bel gians, to whose arbitration the question was referred by the parties. The subject was thoroughly and patiently examined by that justly respected magistrate, and, although the sum awarded to the claimants may not have been as large as was expected, there is no reason to distrust the wisdom of his Majesty's decision. That decision was promptly complied with by Chili, when intelligence in regard to it reached that country.

The joint commission, under the act of the last session for earlying into effect the convention with Peru on the subject of claims, has been organized at Lima, and is engaged in the business entrusted to it.

Difficulties concerning interoceanic transit through Nicaragua are in course of amicable adjustment.

nual message, I have received a representative from the United States of Colombia, and have accredited a minister to that Republic.

Incidents occurring in the progress of our civil war have forced upon my attention the uncertain state of internstional questions touching the rights of foreigners in this country and of United States citizens abroad. In regard o some Governments these rights are at least partially defined by treaties. In no instance, however, is it expressly stipulated that, in the event of a civil war, a foreigner residing in this country, within the lines of the insurgents, is to be exempted from the rule which classes him as a belligerent, in whose behalf the Government of his country cannot expect any privileges or immunities distinct from that character. I regret to say, however, that such claims have been put forward, and, in some instances, in behalf of foreigners who have lived in the United States the greater part of their lives.

There is reason to believe that many persons born i oreign countries, who have declared their intention to become_citizens, or who have been fully naturalized, have evaded the military duty required of them by denying the fact, and thereby throwing upon the Government the burden of proof. It has been found difficult of impracticable to obtain this proof from the want of guides to the proper sources of information. These might be supplied by requiring clerks of courts, where declarations of intention may be made or naturalizations effected, to send periodically lists of the names of the persons naturalized or de claring their intention to become citizens, to the Secretary of the Interior, in whose department those names might

be arranged and printed for general information. There is also reason to believe that foreigners frequently oco ne citizens of the United States for the sole purpos of avading duties imposed by the laws of their native counries, to which, on becoming naturalized here, they at once repair, and, though never returning to the United States, they still claim the interposition of this Government as citizens. Many altercations and great prejudices have heretofore arisen out of this abuse. It is, therefore, submitted to your serious consideration. It might be advisable to fix a limit, beyond which no citizen of the United States residing abroad may claim the interposition of his

The right of suffrage has often been assumed and exer cised by aliens, under pretences of naturalization, which they have disavowed when drafted into the military serrice. I submit the expediency of such an amendment o the law as will make the fact of voting an estoppel against any plea of exemption from military service, or othe

ivil obligation, on the ground of allenage.

In co umon with other western Powers, our relation with Japan have been brought into serious jeopardy through the perverse opposition of the hereditary aristo racy of the empire to the enlightened and liberal policy the Tycoon, designed to bring the country into the socie hoped, although not with entire confi dence, that these difficulties may be peacefully overcome. I ask your attention to the claim of the minister residing there for the damages he sustained in the destruction before of the residence of the legation at Yedo.

Satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Em peror of Russia, which, it is believed, will result in effect ng a continuous line of telegraph through that empir rom our Pacific coast.

I recommend to your favorable consideration the subject an international telegraph across the Atlantic ocean and also of a telegraph between this capital and the national forts along the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico. Such communications, established with any reasonable outlay, would be economical as well as effect aids to the diplomatic, military, and naval service.

The consular system of the United States, under the enactments of the last Congress, begins to be self-sustaining; and there is reason to hope that it may become entirely so, with the increase of trade which will ensue whenever peace is restored. Our ministers abroad have there is restored. Our ministers abroad have to been faithful in defending American rights. In protecting commercial interests, our consuls have necessarily had to encounter increased labors and responsibilities, growing out of the war. These they have, for the most part, met

and discharged with zeal and efficiency. This acknowledgment justly includes those consuls who, residing in Mo-rocco, Egypt, Turkey, Japan, China, and other Oriental countries, are charged with complex functions and extra

ndition of the several organized Territories generally satisfactory, although Indian disturbances in New Mexico have not been entirely suppressed. The mineral resources of Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico, and Arizona are proving far richer than has been here-tofore understood. I lay before you a communication on this subject from the Governor of New Mexico. I again submit to your consideration the expediency of establishing a system for the encouragement of immigration

Although this source of national wealth and strength again flowing with greater freedom than for several year gain flowing with greater freedom than for several years efore the insurrection occurred, there is still a great deiciency of laborers in every field of industry, especially in griculture and in our mines, as well of iron and coal as of he precious metals. While the demand for labor is thus ed here, tens of thousands of persons, destitute of remunerative occupation, are thronging our foreign con-sulates, and offering to emigrate to the United States i essential, but very cheap, assistance can be afforded them. It is easy to see that, under the sharp discipline of civil war, the nation is beginning a new life. This noble effort demands the aid, and ought to receive the attention and upport of the Government. Injuries, unforeseen by the Government and unintended.

may, in some cases, have been inflicted on the subjects or citizens of foreign countries, both at sea and on land, by persons to the service of the United States. As this Government expects redress from other Powers when similar injuries are inflicted by persons in their service upon citizens of the United States, we must be prepared to do justice to foreigners. If the existing judicial tribunals are madequate to this purpose, a special court may be author-ized, with power to hear and decide such claims of the obaracter referred to as may have arisen under treaties and the public law. Conventions for adjusting the claims by joint commission have been proposed to some Govern nents, but no definitive answer to the proposition has yet een received from any.
In the course of the ression I shall probably have occasion

o request you to provide indemnification to claimant where decrees of restitution have been rendered, and dam ages awared by admirality courts; and in other cases where this Government may be acknowledged to be liable in principle, and where the amount of that liability has ascertained by an informal arbitration

The proper officers of the Treasury have deemed them selves required, by the law of the United States upon the subject, to demand a tax upon the incomes of foreign con in this country. While such a demand may not, it strictness, be in derogation of public law, or perhaps any existing treaty between the United States and foreign country, the expediency of so far modifying the act as to exempt from tax the income of such consuls as are not citizens of the United States, derived from the emoluments of their office, or from property not situated in the United States, is submitted to your serious consideration. I make this suggestion upon the ground that a comity which ought to be reciprocated exempts our in all other countries, from taxation to the extent hus indicated The United States, I think, ought not to be exceptionably illiberal to international trade and con

The operations of the Treasury during the last year hav been successfully conducted The enactment by Congress of a national banking law has proved a valuable support of the public credit; and the general legislation in relation to loans has fully answered the expectations of its favorers. Some amendments may be required to perfect existing sws; but no change in their principles or general scope

Since these measures have been in operation, all de mands on the Tressury, including the pay of the army and navy, have been promptly met and fully satisfied. No considerable body of troops, it is believed, were ever more amply provided, and more liberal'y and punctually paid; and it may be added that by no people were the burdet incident to a great war ever more cheerfully burne.

The receipts during the year from all sources, including loans and the balance in the Treasury at its commence ment, were \$901.125 674 86, and the aggregate disburse ments \$595,796,630,65. leaving a balance on the 1st July 1863, of \$5,329,044,21. Of the receipts there were de rived from customs \$69,059,642,40; from internal revenue \$37,640,787.95; from direct tax, \$1,485,103.61; from lands scellaneous sources, \$3,046,615.35; 582 361 57; making the aggregate,

Of the disbursements there were for the civil service Department, \$599,298,600 83; for the Navy Department, \$63,211 105 27; for payment of funded and temporary debt. \$181,086,635 07; making the aggregate \$895,796 630 65; and leaving the balance of \$5 329,044 21.

But the payment of funded and temporary debt having

been made from moneys borrowed during the year, mus be regarded as merely nominal payments, and the moneys borrowed to make them as merely nominal receipts; and their amount, \$181,086,635.07, should therefore be delucted both from receipts and disbursements. This being done, there remains as actual receipts \$720,039,039.79; palance as already stated. The actual receipts and disbursements for the first qua

ter, and the estimated receipts and disbursements for the remaining three quarters of the current fiscal year 1864. will be shown in detail by the report of the Secretary o the Treasury, to which I invite your attention. It is suf-ficent to say here that it is not believed that actual result will exhibit a state of finances less favorable to the coun try than the estimates of that officer heretofore submitted; whilst it is confidently expected that at the close of the year both disbursements and debt will be found very con derably less than has been anticipated

The report of the Secretary of War is a document of reat interest. It consists of-1. The military operations of the year, det iled in th

report of the General-in-Chief.

2 The organization of colored persons into the way

3. The exchange of prisoners, fully set forth in the le-4. The operations under the act for enrolling and call-ing out the national forces, detailed in the report of the

Provost Marshal General.

5. The organization of the invalid corps; and 6. The operation of the several departments of the Quartermaster General, Commissary General, Psymaster General, Chief of Engineers, Chief of Ordnance, and Sur geon General.

It has appeared impossible to make a valuable summs this report, except such as would be too extended for this p'ace, and hence I content myself by asking your areful attention to the report itself

The duties devolving on the naval branch of the service during the year, and throughout the whole of this unhappy contest, have been discharged with fidelity and eminent success. The extensive blockade has been constantly i creasing in efficiency as the pavy has expanded; yet on se ong a line it has so far been impossible to entirely supress illicit trade.

From returns received at the Navy Department it appears that more than one thousand vessels have been cap ured since the blockade was instituted, and that the value f prizes already sent in for adjudication amounts to over birteen millions of dollars The naval force of the United States consists at this

time of five hundred and eighty-eight vessels, completed and in the course of completion, and of these seventy-five are iron-clad or armored steamers. The events of the war give an increased interest and importance to the navy which will probably extend beyond the war itself The armored vessels in our navy completed and in ser

ice, or which are under contract or approaching comple ion, are believed to exceed in number those of any other Power. But, while these may be relied upon for efence and coast service, others of greater strength and apacity will be necessary for cfuising purposes and to naiatain our rightful position on the ocean.

The change that has taken place in naval vessels an aval warfare since the introduction of steam as a motive ower for ships of war demands either a corresponding change in some of our existing navy yards, or the establish nent of new ones, for the construction and necessary re pair of modern naval vessels. No inconsiderable embaassment, delay, and public injury have been experienced from the want of such Governmental establishments. The necessity of such a navy yard, so furnished, at some suitble place upon the Atlantic seaboard, has on repeated ocpasions been brought to the attention of Congress by the Navy Department, and is again presented in the report the Secretary which accompanies this communication

subject, and also to that of establishing a yard and depot for naval purposes upon one of the Western rivers. A naval force has been created on those interior waters, and under many disadvantages, within little more than two say thing hopeful upon this subject. cars, exceeding in sumbers the whole naval force of the ountry at the commencement of the present Administraon Satisfactory and important as have formance of the heroic men of the navy at this interesting period, they are scarcely more wonderful than the success of our mechanics and artisans in the production of war vessels, which has created a new form of naval power.

I think it my duty to invite your special attention to this

Our country has advantages superior to any other nation in our resources of iron and timber, with inexhaustible quantities of fuel in the immediate vicinity of both, and all available and in close proximity to navigable waters. Without the advantage of public works, the resources of the nation have been developed and its power displayed in the construction of a navy of such magnitude which has, at the very period of its creation, rendered signal service

The increase of the number of seamen in the public service from seven thousand five hundred men, in the spring of 1861, to about thirty-four thousand at the present time has been accomplished without special legislation, or extraordinary bounties to promote that increase. It has traordinary bountes to promote that increase. It has been found, however, that the operation of the draft, with the high bounties paid for army recruits, is beginning to affect injuriously the naval service, and will, if not corrected, be likely to impair its efficiency by detaching seamen from their proper vocation and inducing them to enter the army. I therefore respectfully suggest that Congress might aid both the army and naval services by a

definite provision on this subject, which would at the sam

time be equitable to the communities more especially in I commend to your consideration the suggestions of the Secretary of the Navy in regard to the policy of fostering and training seamen, and also the education of officers and engineers for the naval service. The Naval Academy is rendering signal service in preparing midshipmen for the highly responsible duties which in after life they will be required to perform. In order that the country should not be deprived of the proper quota of educated officers, for which legal provision has been made at the Naval School, the vacancies caused by the neglect or omission to make nominations from the States in insurrection have been filled by the Secretary of the Navy. The school is now more full and complete than at any former period, and in every respect entitled to the favorable consideration of

Congress.

During the past fiscal year the financial condition of the Post Office Department has been one of increasing pros-perity, and I am gratified in being able to state that the actual postal revenue has nearly equalled the entire expenditures, the latter amounting to \$11,314,206 84, and the former to \$11,163,789.59, leaving a deficiency of but \$150,417.25. In 1860, the year immediately preceding the rebellion, the deficiency amounted to \$5.656,705.49, the postal receipts of that year being \$2,645,722.19 less

The decrease since 1860 in the annual amount of trans portation has been only about twenty-five per cent, but the annual expenditure on account of the same has been reduced thirty-five per cent. It is manifest, therefore, that the Post Office Department may become self-sustaining in a few years, even with the restoration of the whole

The international conference of postal delegates from the principal countries of Europe and America, which was called at the suggestion of the Postmaster General, met at Paris on the 11th of May last, and concluded its delibera tions on the 8th of June. The principles established by the conference as best adapted to facilitate postal inter-course between nations, and as the basis of future postal conventions, inaugurate a general system of uniform inter-national charges, at reduced rates of postage, and cannot ail to produce beneficial results

I re'er you to the repart of the Secretary of the Interior, which is herewith laid before you, for useful and varied information in relation to the public lands, Indian affairs, patents, pensions, and other matters of public concern per-

taining to his department The quantity of land disposed of during the last and the first quarter of the present fiscal years was three million eight hundred and forty-one thou-and five hundred and rty nine acres, of which one hundred and sixty-one thou sand nine hundred and eleven acres were sold for cash, one million four buodred and fifty-six thousand five hundred and fourteen acres were taken up under the home-stead law, and the residue disposed of under laws granting lands for military bounties, for railroad, and other purposes. It also appears that the sale of the public lands

argely on the increase.

It has long been a cherished opinion of some of ou wise-t statesmen that the people of the United States had a higher and more endu ing interest in the early settleent and substantial cultivation of the public lands than in the amount of direct revenue to be derived from the sale of them. This opinion has had a controlling influence in shaping legislation upon the subject of our national domain. I may cite, as evidence of this, the liberal measures adopted in reference to actual settlers; the grant to the states of the overflowed land within their limits in order to their being reclaimed and rendered fit for cultivation; \$23 253 922 08; for pensions and Indians, \$4.216.520 79; the grants to reliway companies of alternate sections of for interest on public debt, \$24 729.846 51; for the War land upon the contemplated lines of their roads, which, when completed, will so largely multiply the facilities for reaching our distant passessions. This policy has received its most signal and beneficent illustration in the recent

emetment granting homesteads to actual settlers. Since the first day of January last the before mention uantity of one million four hundred and fifty-six thousand ave hundred and fourteen acres of land have been taken up under its provisions. This fact and the amount of sales furnish gratifying evidence of increasing settlement upon the public lands, notwithstanding the great struggle in which the energies of the nation have been engaged, and which has required so large a withdrawal of our citizens

from their accustomed pursuits.

I corduilly concur in the recommendation of the Secre tary of the Interior, suggesting a modification of the act in favor of these engaged in the military and naval service of the United States. I doubt not that Congress will cheerfully adopt such measures as will, without essentially changing the general features of the system, secure, to the greatest practicable extent, its benefits to those who have eft their homes in the defence of the country in this ar

duous crisis. I invite your attention to the views of the Secretary to the propriety of raising, by appropriate legislation, a re-venue from the mineral lands of the United States.

The measures provided at your last session for the re-moval of certain Indian tribes have been carried into effect. Sundry treaties have been negotiated, which will in due time be submitted for the constitutional action of the Senate. They contain stipulations for extinguishing the possessory rights of the Indians to large and valuable tracts of land.

It is hoped that the effect of these treaties will result in the establishment of permanent friendly relations with such of these tribes as have been brought into frequent and bloody collision with our outlying settlements and emigrants. Sound policy and our imperative duty to these wards of the Government demand our anxious and conemigrants. stant attention to their material well-being, to their pro-gress in the arts of civilization, and, above all, to that moral training which, under the blessing of Divine Providence, will confer upon them the elevated and sanctifying influences, the hopes and consolations of the Christian

I suggested in my last annual message the propriety remodelling our Indian system. Subsequent events have satisfied me of its necessity. The details set forth in the report of the Secretary evince the urgent need for imme ste legislative action.

I commend the benevolent institutions, established or patronised by the Government in this District, to your enerous and fostering care.

The attention of Congress, during last session, was en gaged to some extent with the preposition for cularging the water communication between the Mississippi river and the northern seaboard; which proposition, however, failed for the time. Since then, upon a call of the greatest respectability, a convention has been held at Chicago upon he same subject, a summary of whose views is contained in a memorial addressed to the President and Congress, and which I now have the honor to lay before you. That this interest is one which, ere long, will force its own way, do not entertain a doubt, while it is submitted entirel your wisdom as to what can be done now. Augmented interest is given to this subject by the actual commence-ment of work upon the Pacific railroad, under auspices so favorable to rapid progress and completion. The enlarged

navigation becomes a palpable need to the great road.

I transmit the second annual report of the Commission the Department of Agriculture, asking your atten on to the developments in that vital interest of the nation When Congress assembled a year ago the war had already lasted nearly twenty months, and there had been many conflicts on both land and sea, with varying results. The rebellion had been pressed back into reduced limits; yet the tone of public feeling and opinion, at home and abroad, was not satisfactory. With other signs, the popular elecwhile amid much that was cold and menacing the kindest words coming from Europe were uttered in accents of pity that we were too blind to surrender a hopeless cause. Our commerce was suffering greatly by a few armed vessels built upon and (urnished from foreign shores, and we were threatened with such additions from the same quarter as would sweep our trade from the sea and raise our block-We had failed to elicit from European Governments emuse pation proclamation, issued in September, was run-ning its assigned period to the beginning of the new year. final proclamation came, includin anouncement that colored men of suitable condition would be received into the war service. The policy of councipation and of employing black soldiers gave to the u.ure a new aspect, about which hope, and fear, and doubt

contended in uncertain conflict. According to our political system, as a matter of civil administration, the General Government had no lawful power to effect emancipa-tion in any State, and for a long time it had been hoped that the rebellion could be suppressed without resorting to it as a military measure. It was all the while deemed possible that the necessity for it might come, and that f it should, the crisis of the contest would then be presented. It came, and, as we anticipated, it was followed by dark and doubtful days.

Eleven months having now passed, we are permitted to take another review. The rebel borders are pressed still further back, and by the complete opening of the Missis sippi the country dominated by the rebellion is divided into distinct parts, with no practical communication between them. Tennessee and Arkansas have been substantially cleared of insurgent central, and influential citizens in each, owners of slaves and advocates of slavery at the beginning of the rebellion, now declare openly for emancipa-tion in their respective States. Of those States not included in the emancipation preclamation, Maryland and Misseuri, neither of which three years ago would tolerate any restraint upon the extension of slavery into new Territories, only dispute now as to the best mode of removing it within their own limits. Of those who were slaves a the beginning of the rebellion, full one hundred thousand are now in the United States military service, about onehalf of which number actually bear arms in the ranks: thus giving the double advantage of taking so much labor from the insurgent cause, and supplying the places which otherwise must be filled with so many white men. So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soltiers as any. No servile insurrection, or tendency to vioence or cruelty, has marked the measures of emancipation and arming the blacks. These measures have been much discussed in foreign countries, and contemporary with such discussion the tone of public sentiment there is much improved. At home the same measures have been fully discussed, supported, criticised, and denounced, and the annual elections following are highly encouraging to those whose official duty it is to bear the country through this great trial. Thus we have the new reckoning. The crisis which threatened to divide the friends of the Union

Looking now to the present and future, and with reference to a resumption of the national authority within the States wherein that authority has been suspended, I have thought fit to issue a proclamation, a copy of which herewith transmitted.

On examination of this proclamation it will appear, as believed, that nothing is attempted beyond what is amoly instified by the Constitution. True, the form of an oath is given, but no man is coerced to take it. The man is only promised a partion in case he voluntarily takes the oath. The Constitution authorizes the Executve to grant or withhold the pardon at his own absolute discretion; and this in-cludes the power to grant on terms, as is fully established by judicial and other authorities. It is also prefiered that if, in any of the States named, a State Government shall be, in the mode prescribed, set up, such Government shall be recognised and guarantied by the United States. and that under it the State shall on the constitutional conditions, be protected against invasion and domestic violence. The constitutional obligation of the United States to guaranty to every State in the Union a republican form of government, and to protect the State in the cases stated, is explicit and full.

But why tender he benefits of this provision only to a State Government set up in this particular way? This section of the Constitution contemplates a case wherein the element within a State, favorable to republican government, in the Union, may be teo feeble for an opposite and hos-tile element external to or even within the State; and such are precisely the cases with which we are now deal ing. An attempt to guaranty and protect a revived State Government, constructed in whole or in preponderating part from the very element against whose hostility and violence it is to be protected, is simply absurd. There must be a test by which to separate the opposing elements. so as to build only from the sound; and that test is a suffi-ciently liberal one which accepts as sound whoever will make a sworn recantation of his former unsoundness.

But if it be proper to require, as a test of admission to the political body, an oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and to the Union under it, why also to the laws and proclamations in regard to slavery laws and proclamations were enacted and put forth for the purpose of aiding in the suppression of the rebellion. To give them their fullest effect, there had to be a pledge for their maintenance. In my judgment they have sided, and will further aid, the cause for which they were intended. To now abandon them would be not only to relinquish a lever of power, but would also be a cruel and astounding breach of faith.

I may add at this point that while I remain in my preemancipation proclamation; nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress. For these and other reasons it is thought best that support of these measures shall be included in the oath; and it is believed the Executive may lawfully claim it in return for pardon and restoration of ferfeited rights, which he has clear constitutional power to withhold altogether, or grant upon the terms which he shall deem waest for the public interest. It should be observed also that this part of the oath is subject to the modifying and abrogating power of legislation

The proposed acquisseence of the National Executive temporary State arrangement for the freed people is made with the view of possibly modifying the confusion and destitution which must, at best, attenall classes by a total revolution of labor throughout whole States It is noped that the already deeply afflicted peo ple in those States may be somewhat more ready to give up the cause of their affliction, if, to this extent, this vita matter be left to themselves; while no power of the Na tional Executive to prevent an abuse is abridged by th

The suggestion in the proclamation as to maintaining the political frame work of the States on what is called reconstruction, is made in the hope that it may do good without danger of harm. It will save labor and avoid great con

But why any proclamation now upon this subject? This question is beset with the conflicting views that the step might be delayed too long or be taken too seen. In some States the elements for resumption seem ready for action, but remain inactive, apparently, for want of a rallying point -- a plan of action. Why shall A adopt the plan of B rather than B that of A? And if A and B should agree, how can they know but that the General Government here will reject their plan? By the proclamation a plan is presented which may be accepted by them as a rallying point, and which they are assured in advance will not be rejected here. This may bring them to act sooner than they other-

The objections to a premature presentation of a plan i the National Executive consist in the danger of commit tals on points which could be more safely left to further developments. Care has been taken to so shape the docu ment as to avoid embarrassments from this source. Say ing that, on certain terms, certain classes will be pardoned with rights restored, it is not said that other classes, or other terms, will never be included. Saying that recon-struction will be accepted if presented in a specified way. it is not said it will never be accepted in any other way

The movements, by State action, for emancipation is several of the States, not included in the emancipation proclamation, are matters of profound gratulation. And while I do not repeat in detail what I have heret fore so estrestly urged up in this subject, my general views and feelings remain nuchanged; and I trust that Congress will omit no fair opportunity of siding these important steps

to a great consummation.

In the midst of other cares, however important, we must not lose sight of the fact that the war power is still our main reliance. To that power alone can we look, yet fo a time, to give confidence to the people in the contested regions, that the insurgent power will not again overrun

Until that confidence shall be established, little can be done any where for what is called reconstruction. Hence our chiefest care must still be directed to the army at navy, who have thus far borne their harder part so, nobly well. And it may be esteemed fortunate that is giving the greatest efficiency to these indispensable arms we do also honorably recognise the gaffant men, from commander to sentinel, who compose them, and to whom more than to others, the world must stand indebted for the home of freedom disenthrafied, regenerated, enlarged and perpetuated.

ABRAHAM LINC LN. **DECEMBER 8, 1863**

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, in and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of mpeachment

And whereas a rebellion now exists whereby the loyal State Governments of the several States have for a long time been subverted, and many persons have committee and are now guilty of treason against the United States; And whereas, with reference to said rebellion and tres son, laws have been enacted by Congress, declaring for feitures and confiscation of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated, and

also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter, by proclamation, to extend to per-sons who may have participated in the existing rebellion, in any State or part thereof, pardon and amnesty, with such exceptions and at such times and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare;

And whereas the Congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon accords with well-established judi-

cial exposition of the pardoning power;

And whereas, with reference to said rebellion, the President of the United States has issued several proclamations, with provisions in regard to the liberation of slaves; And whereas it is now desired by some persons heretoore engaged in said rebellion to resume their allegiance to the United States, and to reinaugurate loyal State Govvernments within and for their respective States: There-

I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States. do proclaim, declare, and make known to all persons who have, directly or by implication, participated in the exist-ing rebellion, except as hereinafter excepted, that a full pardon is hereby granted to them and each of them, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves, and in property cases where rights of third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that every such person shall take and subscribe an oath, and thenceforward keep and maintain said oath inviolate; and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following, to wit:

"I, ______, do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will her ceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States thereander; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faitfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified, or held void by Congress, or by decision of the Supreme Court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all excellents. in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclama-tions of the Pr. sident made dwing the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court. So help me

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are or shall have been civil or di lomatic officers or agents of the so-called Confederate lovernment; all who have left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; all who are or shall have been military or naval officers of said so-called Confederate G vernment above the rank of colonel in the army r hentenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States Congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned ommissions in the army or navy of the United States and afterwards aided the rebellion; and all who have engaged in any way in treating colored persons, or white persons in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully as prisoners o war, and which persons may have been found in the Unif ted States service as soldiers, scamen, or in any other ca-

And I do further proctsine, declare, and make known that whenever, in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florids, South Carolina, and North Carolina a number of persons, not less than one-tenth in number of the votes cast in such State at the Presidential election of the year f our Lord one thousand eight hundred and each having taken the outh aforesaid, and not having since violated it, and being a qualified voter by the election law of the State existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall re-estabiish a State government which shall be republican, and in nowise contravening said oath, such shall be recognised as the true government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the conattutional provision which declares that "the United States shall guaranty to every State in this Union a repubhear form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the Legi-lature, or the Executive, (when the Legislature cannot be conned,) against domestic violence.

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that any provision which may be adopted by such State Government in relation to the freed people of such State, which shall recognise and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a laboring, landless, homeless class, will not be objected to by the National Executive.

And it is suggested as not improper that, in constructng a loyal State Government in any State, the name of State, the boundary, the subdivisions, the constitution, and the general code of laws, as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to the modifications made neceseary by the conditions hereinbefore stated, and such others, if any, not contravening said conditions, and which may be deemed expedient by those framing the new State

this preclamation, so far as it relates to State Govern-ments, has no reference to States wherein loyal State Governments have all the while been maintained And, for the same reason, it may be proper to further say, that whether members sent to Congress from any State shall admitted to seats constitutionally rests exclusively with the respective Houses, and not to any extent with the Ex-ecutive. And still further, that this proclamation is intended to present the people of the States wherein the national authority has been suspended, and loyal State Governments have been subverted, a mode in and by which the national authority and loyal State Governments may be re established within said States, or in any of them; and, while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest, with his present impressions, it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be accept-

Given under my hand at the city of Washington the eighth day of December, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States, of America the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT.

A mass meeting was held at New York on Thursday evening in order to forward enlistments, which is stated to have been a great, success. The Mayor presided, and the meeting was addressed by several distinguished gentlemen. The following letter from President Lincoln was read and elicited much applause :

> EXECUTIVE MANSION. Washington, December 2, 1863.

Messrs. Geo. Opdyke, Jos. Sutherland, Benj. F. Manuerre, Prosper M. Wetmore, and Spencer Kirby, committee Yours of the 28th ultimo, inviting me to be present at a neeting to be held at the Cooper Institute on the 3d instant to promote the raising of volunteers, is received.

Nothing would be more agreeable to my feelings or better second with my judgment than to contribute, if I cou'd, by my presence or otherwise, to that eminently patriotic object. Nevertheless, the now early meeting of Congress, together with a temporary illness, renders my attendance impossible.

You purpose, also, to celebrate our Western victories. Freed from apprehension of wounding the just sensibilities of our brave soldiers fighting elsewhere, it would be exceedingly agreeable to me to join in a suitable acknowledgment to those of the great West, with whom I was born and have passed my life. And it is exceedingly gratifying that a portion lately of the Army of the Potomac, but now service with the great Army of the West, have borne so conspicuous a part in the late brilliant triumphs in

Honor to the soldier and sailor every where who bravely pears his country's cause. Honor also to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field, and serves as he best an the same cause. Honor to him only less than to him who braves for the common good the storms of Heaven

and the storm of battle. A. LINCOLN Your obedient servant.

The Springfield (Mass.) Republican says: "Somehow our radical friends, who have been denouncing the Constitution for the last quarter of a century as a 'covenant with death and an agreement with hell, seem to have got the idea that the war has abolished the Constitution. The rebels think so too. Both are mistaken. The Constitution still lives, and will not only survive this war, but bids fair to stand for some blessed centuries of national peace and prosperity yet to come."

We are happy to announce that Admiral SHUBRICK has so far advanced in his convalescence as to receive his friends. The progress of his recovery, though slow, has been steady, showing the perfect preservation of his vital